CRIME

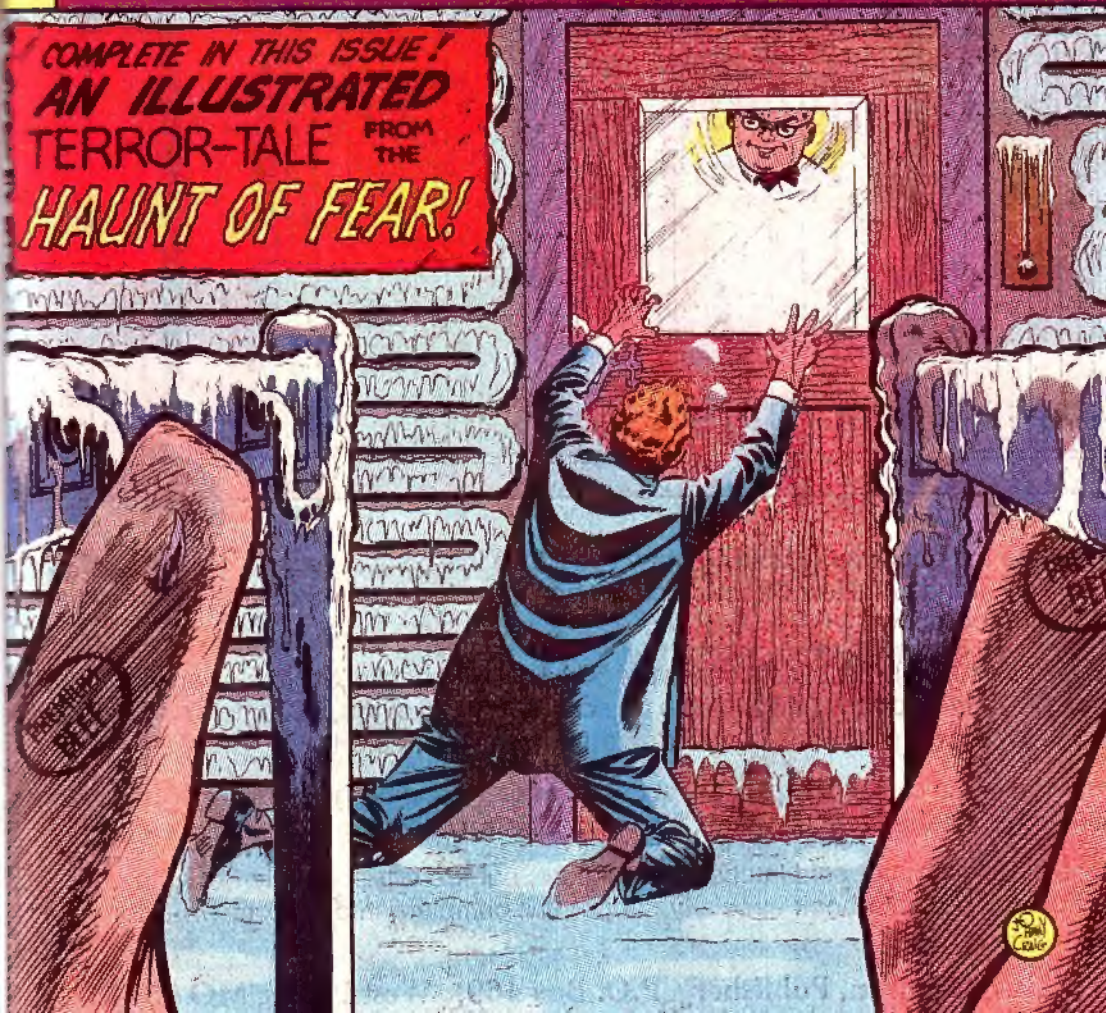
AN ENTERTAINING COMIC

NO. 8

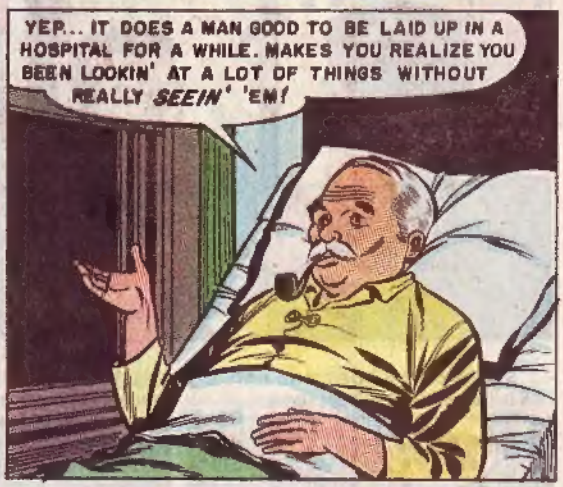
CRIME SUSPENSTORIES

REPRINT EDITION

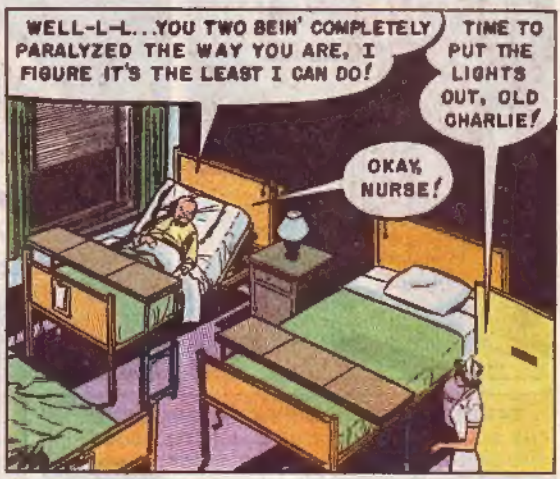
COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE!
AN ILLUSTRATED TERROR-TALE FROM THE HAUNT OF FEAR!

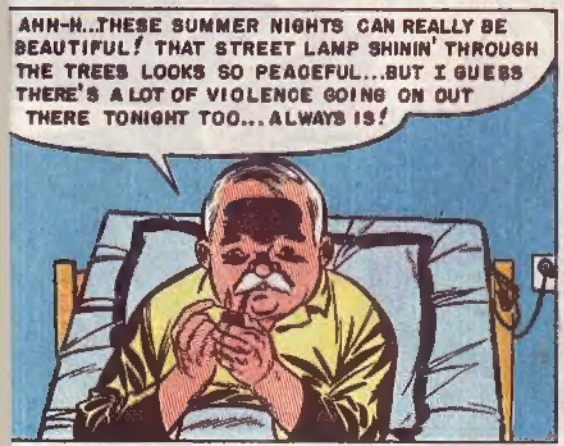


OUT OF THE FRYING PAN...


YEP... IT DOES A MAN GOOD TO BE LAID UP IN A HOSPITAL FOR A WHILE. MAKES YOU REALIZE YOU BEEN LOOKIN' AT A LOT OF THINGS WITHOUT REALLY *SEEIN'* 'EM!

IF YOU DIDN'T TELL US ALL THAT YOU SEE OUT THAT WINDOW, OLD CHARLIE, HERB AND I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO "SEE" AT ALL!
YEAH! TELLIN' US ABOUT THE TREES, THE PEOPLE, AND EVERYTHING KINDA MAKES IT A LOT EASIER FOR US!


WELL-L-L...YOU TWO BEIN' COMPLETELY PARALYZED THE WAY YOU ARE, I FIGURE IT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO!
TIME TO PUT THE LIGHTS OUT, OLD CHARLIE!
OKAY, NURSE!


AHH-H...THESE SUMMER NIGHTS CAN REALLY BE BEAUTIFUL! THAT STREET LAMP SHININ' THROUGH THE TREES LOOKS SO PEACEFUL...BUT I GUESS THERE'S A LOT OF VIOLENCE GOING ON OUT THERE TONIGHT TOO... ALWAYS IS!

...MAY SEEM HARD TO BELIEVE, BUT RIGHT NOW I BET THERE'S A HEAP OF PEOPLE GETTIN' READY TO WALK INTO A MESS OF TROUBLE! YES, SIR... I BET THERE'S A *HEAP O'* PEOPLE...
J. Craig

AS OLD CHARLIE'S EYES SLEEPILY CLOSE... NOT TOO FAR AWAY IN A TENEMENT, HANK BOWERS ARTFULLY FINISHES BOWING HIS TIE...

...COMBS HIS HAIR FOR THE UMPTEENTH TIME...

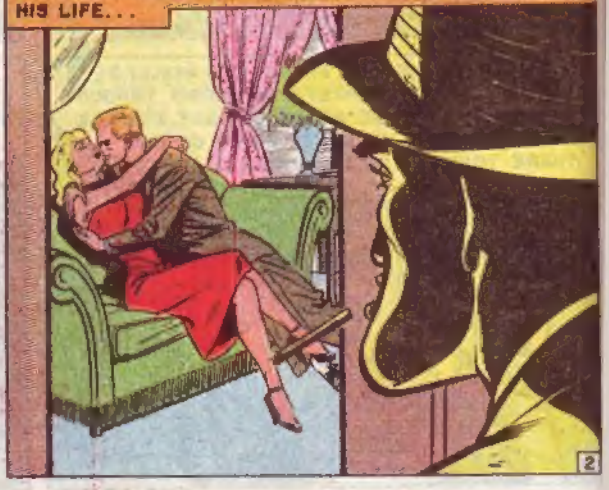
...SLIPS ON HIS COAT AND HAT AND LEAVES THE BUILDING...

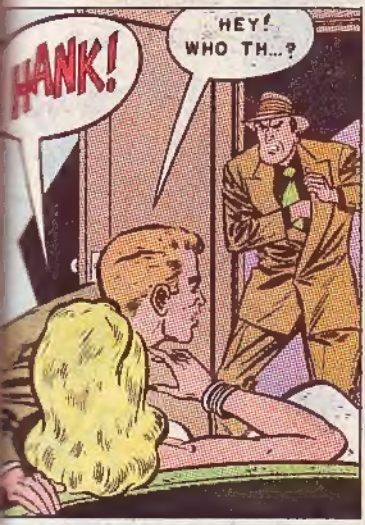
HE RIDES SWIFTLY, LIGHTLY, THROUGH THE CITY STREETS...

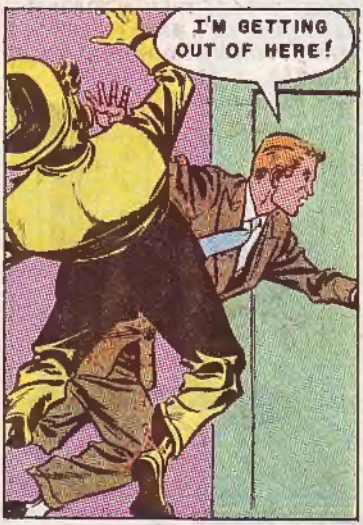
...TO HIS GIRL-FRIEND'S HOUSE...

...TAKES THE SELF-SERVICE ELEVATOR TO THE SIXTH FLOOR, STRIDES JAUNTILY DOWN THE CORRIDOR...

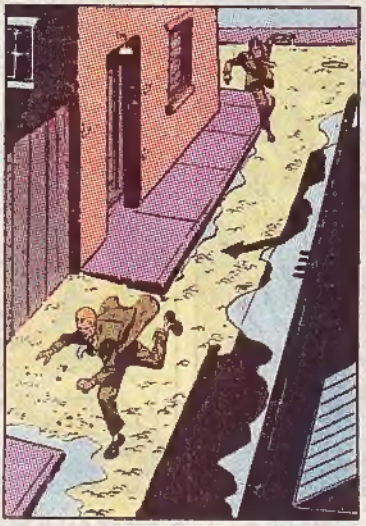
...AND OPENS HER DOOR... TO GET THE SURPRISE OF HIS LIFE...







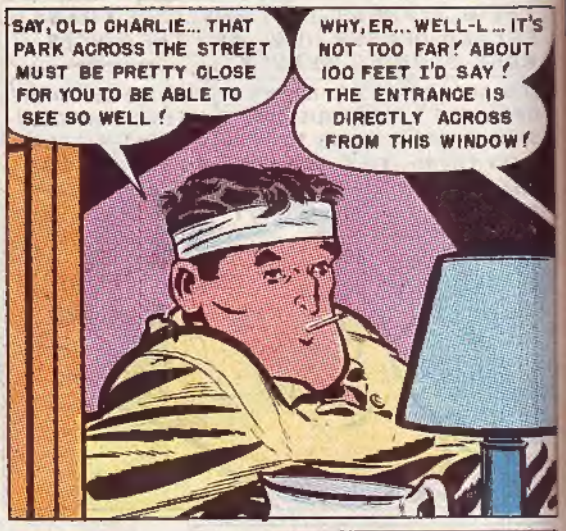
THE TWO MEN RACE THROUGH THE DESERTED STREETS...ONE HOPING TO PRESERVE LIFE... THE OTHER TRYING TO DESTROY!



(PANT) THERE! THAT'LL (GASP!) TEACH HIM TO... MAKE A PLAY... (GASP!) FOR MY...OHH-H-H! MY HEAD! I...I... HURTS (PANT!) FEEL DIZZY!
HELLO, POLICE? I WANT TO REPORT A MURDER! YES... I SAW IT ALL!
IT WAS MANY HOURS LATER WHEN HANK BOWERS REGAINED CONCIOUSNESS. HE DIDN'T KNOW WHERE HE WAS, AND HE COULD SEE NOTHING!
I...I KNOW MY EYES ARE OPEN! WHY CAN'T I SEE ANYTHING? TURN ON THE LIGHTS! TURN ON THE LIGHTS!
NURSE! SEDATIVE! QUICKLY!
STRONG HANDS GRASPED HIM...THE STING OF A NEEDLE JABBED HIS ARM...
I'M BLIND! I'M BLIND! I CAN'T SEE!
CALM DOWN, BOWERS! IT'S ONLY TEMPORARY!
THIS INJECTION WILL QUIET HIM! HE'LL BE ASLEEP IN TWO MINUTES!
A GREAT CALM BEGAN TO DESCEND ON HANK. HIS BODY WENT LIMP AND THE STRONG HANDS RELEASED HIM. THE VOICES SEEMED TO COME FROM FAR AWAY...
THAT BLOW HE RECEIVED ON THE HEAD WAS WHAT DID IT!
IF YOU ASK ME, I THINK HE'S BETTER OFF BLIND!
SURE! AS SOON AS HIS EYESIGHT RETURNS, HE'LL GO ON TRIAL FOR MURDER!

THE BLACKNESS THAT ENVELOPED HANK SEEMED DENSER NOW... AND THE VOICES WERE GROWING WEAKER...
IT'S AN OPEN AND SHUT CASE! THEY FOUND THE GUN IN HIS HAND!
...AND HIS OWN GIRL FRIEND IS GOING TO TESTIFY AGAINST HIM!
NOT ONLY THAT! THERE WAS EVEN AN EYE-WITNESS TO THE KILLING!
BUT THEY WON'T PUT HIM ON TRIAL UNTIL HE GETS WELL!
DOESN'T MATTER! HE'S BOUND TO GET THE CHAIR!
...HASN'T GOT A CHANCE!
THE FOLLOWING DAY...
HEH, HEH! NOW THOSE TWO KIDS ARE SQUABBLIN' OVER THAT TOY! HEH! AND HERE COME THEIR MOTHERS!
JERK!
...AND IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS...
THAT YOUNG, CURLY-HEADED MAN IS WALKIN' THROUGH THE PARK WITH HIS GIRL AGAIN! THEY MAKE A NICE COUPLE...
DOESN'T HE EVER SHUT UP?
AND ONE MORNING WHEN HANK AWOKE...
HEY! I CAN SEE A BIT BETTER TODAY! INSTEAD OF TOTAL BLACKNESS, EVERYTHING LOOKS LIKE VAGUE MASSES OF DARK GREY!
CAN'T SEE WELL ENOUGH TO MAKE THINGS OUT, BUT MY EYESIGHT IS GETTING BETTER! HMM...THAT ONLY BRINGS ME THAT MUCH CLOSER TO THE CHAIR...
AH, IT'S A FINE DAY! HEAR THOSE BIRDS SINGING IN THE TREES 'CROSS THE STREET IN THE PARK?
THEY SURE SOUND HAPPY, DON'T THEY? I CAN SEE THEM FROM HERE!
IF I KEEP ACTING COMPLETELY BLIND, MAYBE I CAN STALL LONG ENOUGH FOR MY EYES TO GET GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME TO ESCAPE! HA! HA! AND I KNOW JUST THE BIG-MOUTH JERK TO HELP ME!
5

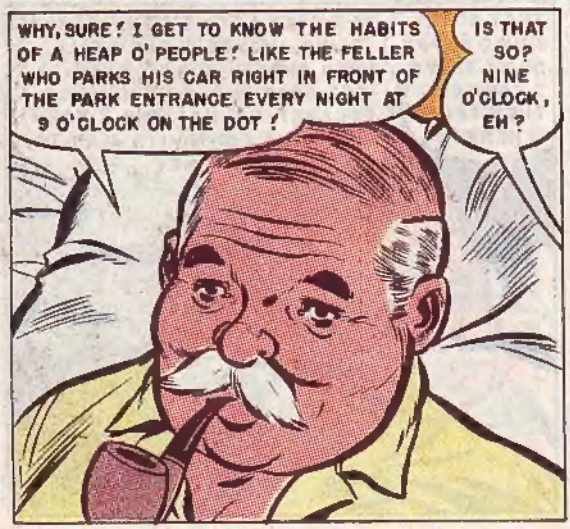
...LOT OF PEOPLE WALKIN' BY THE PARK NOW... GOIN' TO WORK, I GUESS! AND THERE'S A LITTLE OLD LADY IN A BLUE DRESS WALKIN' HER DOG!
I'LL HAVE TO, BE CAREFUL! DON'T WANT IT TO SOUND TOO OBVIOUS!

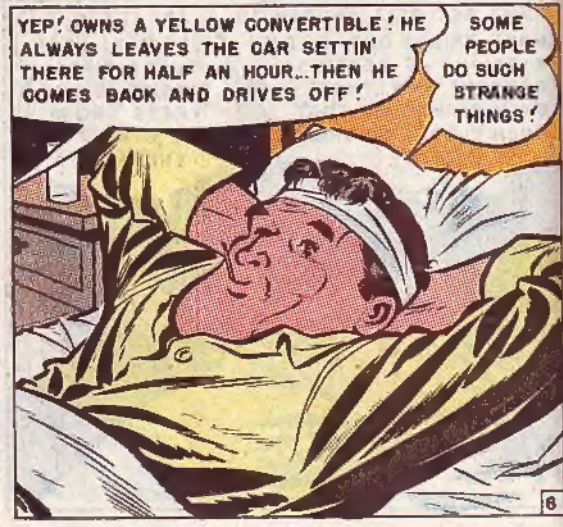

SAY, OLD CHARLIE... THAT PARK ACROSS THE STREET MUST BE PRETTY CLOSE FOR YOU TO BE ABLE TO SEE SO WELL!
WHY, ER... WELL-L... IT'S NOT TOO FAR! ABOUT 100 FEET I'D SAY! THE ENTRANCE IS DIRECTLY ACROSS FROM THIS WINDOW!

BUT STILL...WE'RE PRETTY HIGH UP, AREN'T WE? I MEAN...
WHY, NO! NO, NOT AT ALL! AIN'T MORE'N A DROP OF FIFTEEN FEET FROM HERE TO THE GROUND!

NOT WISHING TO OVERPLAY HIS HAND, HANK SAID NO MORE.... UNTIL LATE THAT AFTERNOON...
NICE PARK OVER THERE, EH?
OH, YES! FULL O' TREES AND BUSHES! IT'S A *REAL PRETTY* PLACE!

IT'S A WONDER SOME O' THOSE KIDS DON'T GET LOST, RUNNIN' AROUND IN THERE, THE WAY THEY DO!
HA! HA! GUESS YOU GET TO KNOW SOME OF THE PEOPLE QUITE WELL!


WHY, SURE! I GET TO KNOW THE HABITS OF A HEAP O' PEOPLE! LIKE THE FELLER WHO PARKS HIS CAR RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE PARK ENTRANCE EVERY NIGHT AT 9 O'CLOCK ON THE DOT!
IS THAT SO? NINE O'CLOCK, EH?


YEP! OWNS A YELLOW CONVERTIBLE! HE ALWAYS LEAVES THE CAR SETTIN' THERE FOR HALF AN HOUR...THEN HE COMES BACK AND DRIVES OFF!
SOME PEOPLE DO SUCH STRANGE THINGS!

IT WAS LATER THAT DAY THAT THE DOCTOR AND NURSE CAME. HANK REMAINED STILL, FEIGNING SLEEP...
HE'S ASLEEP!
JUST AS WELL! IT'LL PROBABLY BE THE LAST DECENT SLEEP HE'LL GET! THEY'RE GOING TO TAKE HIM AWAY TO JAIL TOMORROW MORNING, WHETHER HIS EYES ARE WELL OR NOT!
LUVVA MIKE! ONCE THEY GET ME OUT OF HERE, I WON'T STAND A CHANCE! I'LL HAVE TO MAKE MY ESCAPE TONIGHT! YEAH! TONIGHT... AT NINE O'CLOCK!
NERVOUSLY, HANK WAITED AS THE HOURS TICKED BY! THEN...
IT'S NINE O'CLOCK! THAT GUY BETTER HAVE PARKED HIS CAR, BECAUSE HERE I GO!
AH! HERE'S THE WINDOW!
HEY! WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOIN'? GET BACK IN BED!
...ONLY A FIFTEEN FOOT DROP TO THE GROUND!
HA, HA! JUST LIKE OLD CHARLIE SAID! NOW STRAIGHT AHEAD... TO THE CAR IF IT'S THERE, OR INTO THE PARK IF IT'S NOT! FULL SPEED AHEAD! %#!@! WISH I COULD SEE BETTER!
SLAM!

OOOOHH-H! MY FACE...HEAD! I MUST'VE RUN THE WRONG WAY! (GASP!) GOTTA GET UP! GOTTA FIND THE RIGHT WAY! HURRY! (GASP) GUARD'S COMIN'!
WHAT'S THE MATTER? CAN'T FEEL ANYTHING BUT BRICKS! THERE'S NO WAY OUT! THERE'S...(SOB!) NOTHING HERE BUT FOUR BRICK WALLS!
(SOB!) WHAT A SAP I'VE BEEN! ALL THE TIME THERE HASN'T BEEN ANYTHING (SOB) OUT HERE AT ALL! NOTHING BUT BRICK WALLS!
OKAY, BOWERS! CATCH THIS ROPE SO WE CAN PULL YOU UP!
WHAT HAPPENED, OLD CHARLIE? WHY COULDN'T HE REACH THE PARK?
WELL, ER... YOU SEE, HE BROKE HIS ANKLE BY JUMPING OUT THE WINDOW! COULDN'T RUN!
OH...GEE! PRETTY DESPERATE, WASN'T HE?
GUESS SO, HERB! MOST MURDERERS ARE WHEN THEIR JUDGEMENT TIME DRAWS NEAR!
OH, WELL! WHAT'S GOING ON OUTSIDE, OLD CHARLEY?
NOTHIN' MUCH RIGHT NOW! KINDA PEACEFUL AND QUIET-LIKE! THAT STREET-LAMP IS SHININ'...AND A BREEZE IS STIRRIN' THE TREES...
OH...THERE'S THAT CURLY-HEADED MAN WALKIN' WITH HIS GIRL! THEY'RE SUCH A NICE COUPLE... SO HAPPY-LOOKIN'! AND YET...I BET THERE'S A HEAP O' PEOPLE IN TROUBLE TONIGHT!
-THE END-

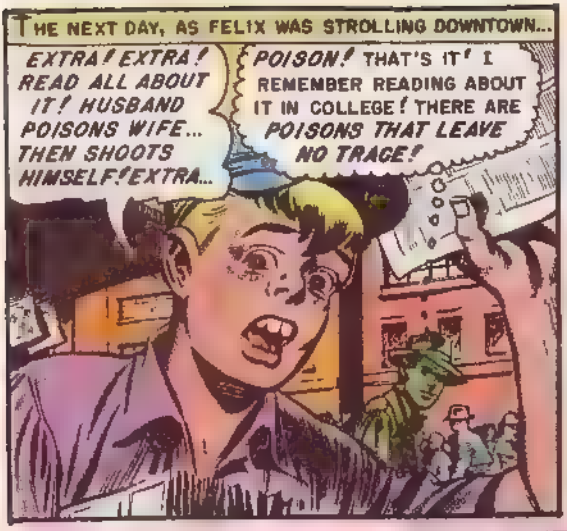
A TRACE OF MURDER!

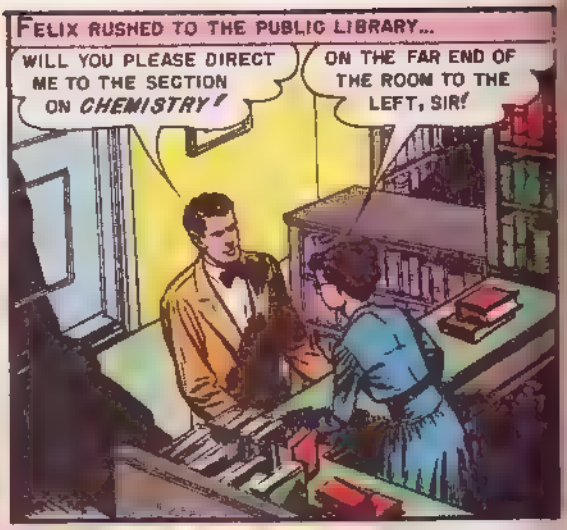
IRVING FENWICK TURNED AWAY FROM HIS WIFE MURIEL ...HIS FACE GRIM WITH JEALOUS ANGER! HE POURED THE WINE INTO THE TWO GLASSES AND DREW THE BOTTLE OF ARSENIC FROM HIS POCKET...
THEN..THIS IS GOOD-BYE, MURIEL! YOU'RE LEAVING ME FOR HIM!
I'M SORRY, IRVING! I'LL GET A QUIET DIVORCE! I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND!

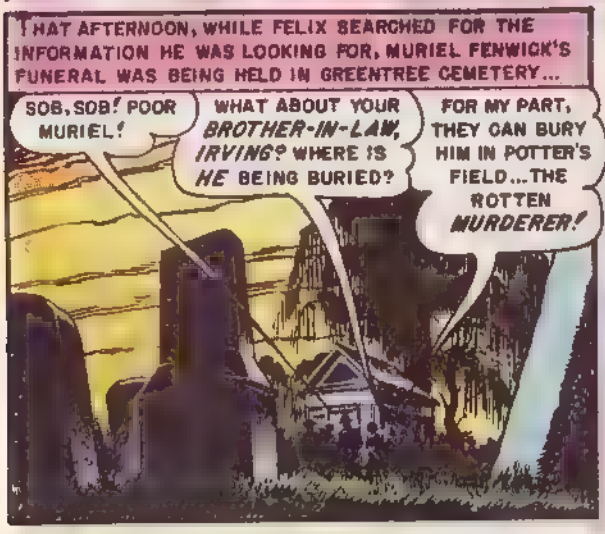
IRVING EMPTIED THE ARSENIC INTO MURIEL'S DRINK AND HANDED HER THE GLASS...
I UNDERSTAND, MURIEL! LET'S HAVE A FAREWELL TOAST, EH?
OF COURSE, IRVING! I'M GLAD YOU'RE NOT TAKING THIS TOO HARD!
1

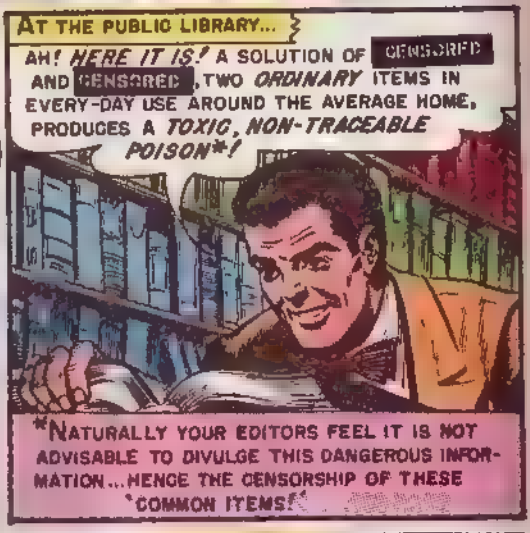
THEY CLINKED GLASSES, AND MURIEL DRANK DOWN THE POISONED WINE! THEN SHE STOOD UP...
WELL, I GUESS I'LL PACK MY THINGS!
NEED HELP, DEAR?
MURIEL WENT INTO THE BEDROOM.
NO, THANK YOU, IRVING! I CAN MANAGE!
SUIT YOURSELF!
IRVING SAT IN THE LIVING-ROOM, LISTENING TO THE DRAWERS OPENING AND CLOSING AS MURIEL PACKED! THEN...AFTER A WHILE
IRVING! I. I...
YOU CALL ME, DEAR?
MURIEL SLUMPED TO THE FLOOR, HER EYES GLAZED! IRVING LEERED DOWN AT HER! SHE WAS DEAD...
IF I CAN'T HAVE YOU, MURIEL NO ONE WILL!
THEN IRVING WENT TO HIS DESK AND TOOK OUT A GUN! HE LIFTED THE BLACK MUZZLE TO HIS TEMPLE...
..AND NOW THERE'S NOTHING LEFT FOR ME...SO...
THE GUN EXPLODED AND THE BULLET CRASHED INTO IRVING FENWICK'S BRAIN! HE DROPPED TO THE FLOOR! THE ACRID GUN-SMOKE DRIFTED ACROSS THE ROOM AND OUT OF THE OPEN WINDOW WHERE IT WAS CAUGHT UP BY THE FAINT BREEZE THAT FANNED THE DARKENED CITY! FAR ACROSS TOWN, THE BREEZE DRIFTED IN THROUGH AN OPEN WINDOW
SHUT THE WINDOW, FELIX! THERE'S A DRAFT!
YES, EMMA!
FELIX MORLEY GOT TO HIS FEET AND SLAMMED THE WINDOW SHUT! HE STOOD FOR A MOMENT, STARING OUT OF IT! DOWN BELOW, UNDER THE STREET LAMP, A WOMAN SMILED UP AT HIM...
L-LOOKS LIKE A NICE NIGHT OUT, EMMA! THINK I'LL TAKE A WALK!
HMMPH! AGAIN? WHY CAN'T YOU JUST SIT HERE WITH ME? MUST YOU ALWAYS GO WALKING?
2

FELIX WASN'T LISTENING TO EMMA AS HE WENT FOR HIS HAT! HIS MIND WAS FAR AWAY... ON THE WOMAN DOWN BELOW...
YOU'RE TIRED OF ME! THAT'S IT! YOU'RE BORED! YOU...
DON'T WAIT UP FOR ME, EMMA!
FELIX HURRIED DOWN THE STEPS AND OUT OF THE APARTMENT BUILDING! HE NODDED TO THE WOMAN ACROSS THE STREET, AND SHE TURNED INTO THE PARK! FELIX CROSSED OVER AND FOLLOWED! THEN...
OH, FELIX! I THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER COME!
EMMA WAS DIFFICULT TONIGHT, HELEN!
THEY CLUNG THERE IN THE DARK SHADOWS BENEATH THE TREES...
I CAN'T STAND IT ANY LONGER, FELIX! YOU'VE GOT TO LEAVE HER! WE CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS... MEETING SECRETLY...
YOU MEAN, DIVORCE HER, HELEN?
I'D BE CRAZY TO DIVORCE EMMA! I MARRIED HER FOR HER MONEY! DO YOU THINK I LIKE BEING TIED TO AN OLDER WOMAN?
MONEY. MONEY! THAT'S ALL YOU THINK ABOUT! IF YOU LOVED ME...
I DO LOVE YOU, HELEN! BUT.. THERE MUST BE ANOTHER WAY! IF I RAN OFF WITH YOU, WE'D LIVE LIKE ANIMALS, SCROUNGING FOR EVERY CENT! EMMA'S MONEY WOULD BE MINE IF... IF...
FELIX! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? PLEASE! DON'T STARE LIKE THAT! YOU... YOU FRIGHTEN ME!
GIVE ME A LITTLE TIME, HELEN! LET ME WORK SOMETHING OUT!
ALL RIGHT! BUT DON'T DO ANYTHING WRONG, FELIX! I.. I WOULDN'T WANT THAT!
MEANWHILE, ACROSS TOWN. IN THE APARTMENT OF IRVING AND MURIEL FENWICK...
THAT WRAPS IT UP, CHIEF! A NEAT CASE OF MURDER AND SUICIDE!
OKAY, LIEUTENANT! NOTIFY THEIR RELATIVES! I'LL MAKE OUT THE REPORT!
3

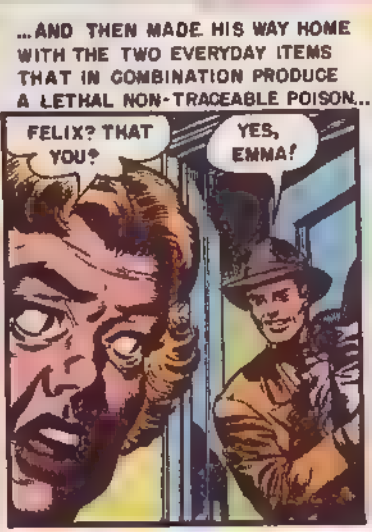

THE NEXT DAY, AS FELIX WAS STROLLING DOWNTOWN...
EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT! HUSBAND POISONS WIFE... THEN SHOOTS HIMSELF! EXTRA...
POISON! THAT'S IT! I REMEMBER READING ABOUT IT IN COLLEGE! THERE ARE POISONS THAT LEAVE NO TRACE!


FELIX RUSHED TO THE PUBLIC LIBRARY...
WILL YOU PLEASE DIRECT ME TO THE SECTION ON CHEMISTRY!
ON THE FAR END OF THE ROOM TO THE LEFT, SIR!

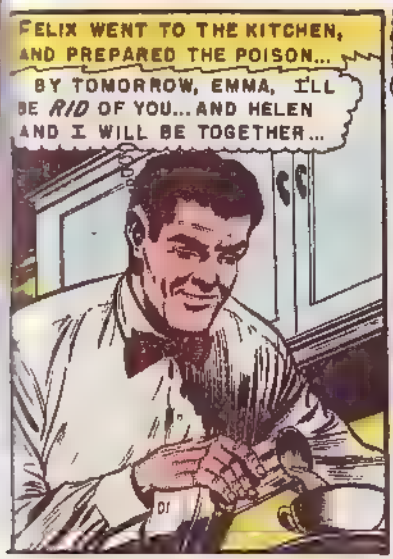

THAT AFTERNOON, WHILE FELIX SEARCHED FOR THE INFORMATION HE WAS LOOKING FOR, MURIEL FENWICK'S FUNERAL WAS BEING HELD IN GREENTREE CEMETERY...
SOB, SOB! POOR MURIEL!
WHAT ABOUT YOUR BROTHER-IN-LAW, IRVING? WHERE IS HE BEING BURIED?
FOR MY PART, THEY CAN BURY HIM IN POTTER'S FIELD...THE ROTTEN MURDERER!


AT THE PUBLIC LIBRARY...
AH! HERE IT IS! A SOLUTION OF CENSORED AND CENSORED, TWO ORDINARY ITEMS IN EVERY-DAY USE AROUND THE AVERAGE HOME, PRODUCES A TOXIC, NON-TRACEABLE POISON*!
*NATURALLY YOUR EDITORS FEEL IT IS NOT ADVISABLE TO DIVULGE THIS DANGEROUS INFORMATION...HENCE THE CENSORSHIP OF THESE COMMON ITEMS!

LATER THAT DAY, FELIX STOPPED OFF AT A GROCERY STORE WHERE HE WAS NOT KNOWN...
I'D LIKE A SMALL CENSORED AND A LARGE CAN OF CENSORED!
YES, SIR! WILL THAT BE ALL?

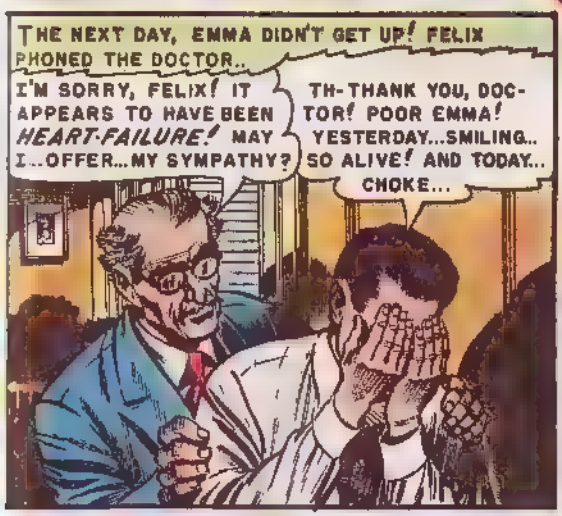

...AND THEN MADE HIS WAY HOME WITH THE TWO EVERYDAY ITEMS THAT IN COMBINATION PRODUCE A LETHAL NON-TRACEABLE POISON...
FELIX? THAT YOU?
YES, EMMA!

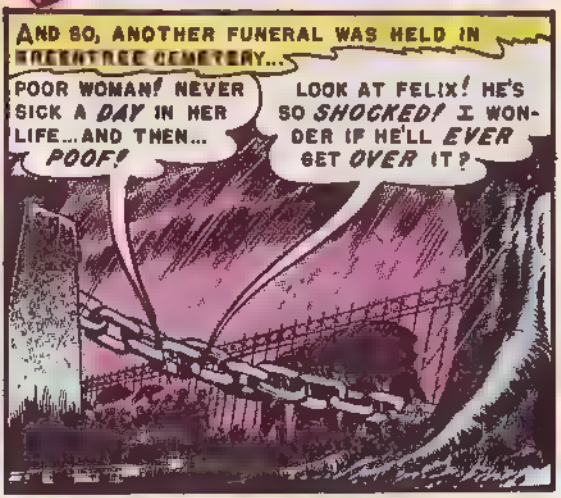
THAT NIGHT...
HOW ABOUT A CUP OF COFFEE, DEAR?
WHY, FELIX! HOW NICE OF YOU TO OFFER! I'D LOVE ONE!

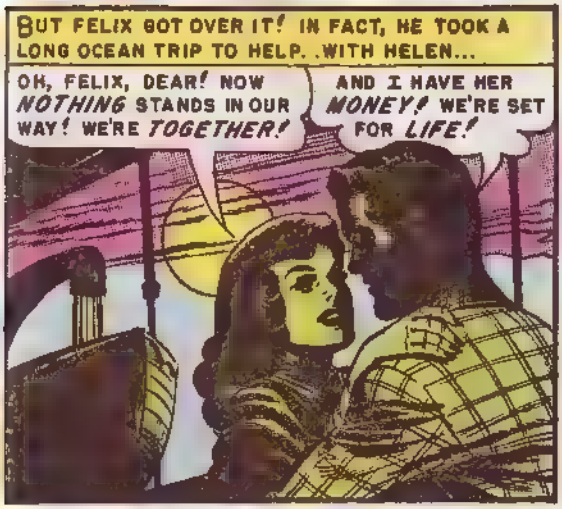

FELIX WENT TO THE KITCHEN, AND PREPARED THE POISON...
BY TOMORROW, EMMA, I'LL BE *RID* OF YOU... AND HELEN AND I WILL BE TOGETHER...

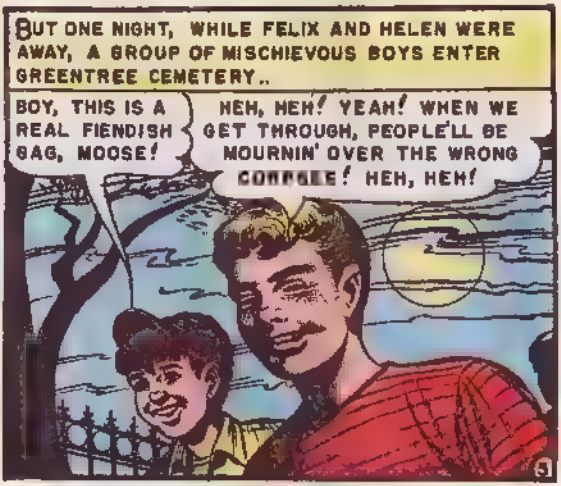
HE PUT A LARGE DOSE INTO EMMA'S COFFEE...
HERE YOU ARE, DEAR!
THANK YOU, FELIX!

EMMA SIPPED THE COFFEE, FINALLY FINISHING IT..
NOT THAT I'M *COMPLAINING*, FELIX! IT WAS SWEET OF YOU.. BUT... YOU *DO* MAKE TERRIBLE COFFEE! IT WAS *BITTER!*
WAS IT, EMMA? I'M *SO* SORRY!

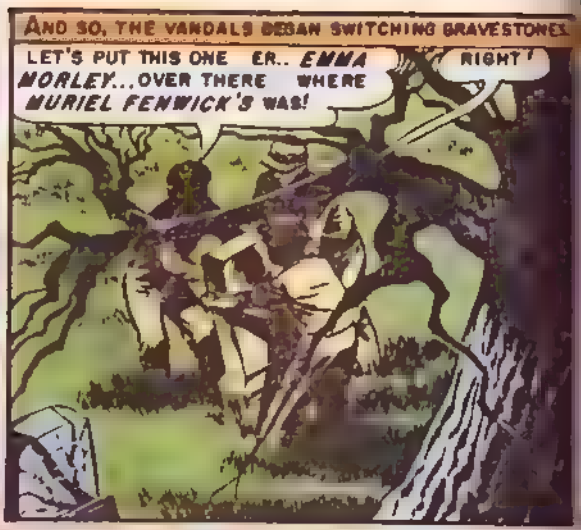

THE NEXT DAY, EMMA DIDN'T GET UP! FELIX PHONED THE DOCTOR..
I'M SORRY, FELIX! IT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN *HEART-FAILURE!* MAY I...OFFER...MY SYMPATHY?
TH-THANK YOU, DOCTOR! POOR EMMA! YESTERDAY...SMILING... SO ALIVE! AND TODAY... CHOKE...


AND SO, ANOTHER FUNERAL WAS HELD IN GREENTREE CEMETERY...
POOR WOMAN! NEVER SICK A *DAY* IN HER LIFE...AND THEN... *POOF!*
LOOK AT FELIX! HE'S SO *SHOCKED!* I WONDER IF HE'LL *EVER* GET *OVER* IT?


BUT FELIX GOT OVER IT! IN FACT, HE TOOK A LONG OCEAN TRIP TO HELP. .WITH HELEN...
OH, FELIX, DEAR! NOW *NOTHING* STANDS IN OUR WAY! WE'RE *TOGETHER!*
AND I HAVE HER *MONEY!* WE'RE SET FOR *LIFE!*

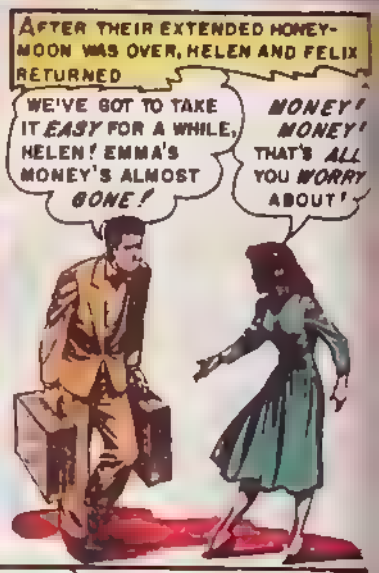

BUT ONE NIGHT, WHILE FELIX AND HELEN WERE AWAY, A GROUP OF MISCHIEVOUS BOYS ENTER GREENTREE CEMETERY..
BOY, THIS IS A REAL FIENDISH GAG, MOOSE!
HEH, HEH! YEAH! WHEN WE GET THROUGH, PEOPLE'LL BE MOURNIN' OVER THE WRONG CORPSE! HEH, HEH!

C'MON! HELP ME WITH THIS HEADSTONE! THERE'S ONE OVER THERE ABOUT THE SAME SIZE!
OKAY, BUTCH! ONE TWO HEAVE!


AND SO, THE VANDALS BEGAN SWITCHING GRAVESTONES
LET'S PUT THIS ONE ER.. EMMA MORLEY... OVER THERE WHERE MURIEL FENWICK'S WAS!
RIGHT!

HEY! SOMEONE'S COMIN'!
CHICKY! IT'S THE CARETAKER! LET'S SCRAM!

THE GANG OF BOYS SCURRIED OUT OF THE CEMETERY LEAVING EMMA MORLEY'S GRAVESTONE ON MURIEL FENWICK'S GRAVE
NASTY BRATS! HMMM! LOOKS LIKE THEY DIDN'T DO ANY HARM! EVERYTHING SEEMS IN ORDER!


AFTER THEIR EXTENDED HONEYMOON WAS OVER, HELEN AND FELIX RETURNED
WE'VE GOT TO TAKE IT EASY FOR A WHILE, HELEN! EMMA'S MONEY'S ALMOST GONE!
MONEY! MONEY! THAT'S ALL YOU WORRY ABOUT!

SURE IT IS! WHY DO YOU THINK I KILLED..
KILLED? I THOUGHT SHE HER HEART..

HER HEART! DON'T BE A FOOL, HELEN! I POISONED HER! I DID IT FOR US!
FOR US? MURDER! YOU MUST BE MAD! I WON'T STAY HERE WITH A MURDERER!

YOU'LL STAY AND LIKE IT! YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO END UP LIKE HER...WOULD YOU, HELEN?
N-NO! SOB, SOB! I...I DIDN'T MEAN IT, FELIX! I..I'M SORRY!
THE NEXT DAY, AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS...
HE...HE SAID HE POISONED HER! HE THREATENED ME! SAID I'D END UP LIKE HER IF I TALKED! YOU'VE GOT TO PROTECT ME!
OKAY, OKAY! TAKE IT EASY, MRS. MORLEY!
POLICE H.Q.
LATER, FELIX HAD A VISITOR...
SHE'S CRAZY, LIEUTENANT! I NEVER SAID ANY SUCH THING! MY WIFE HAS BEEN NERVOUS LATELY! SHE...
THEN YOU WON'T MIND IF WE EXHUME YOUR EX-WIFE'S BODY FOR AN AUTOPSY, EH, MR. MORLEY?
WHY, NOT AT ALL! I HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE! GO RIGHT AHEAD!
THANKS, MR. MORLEY! WE WILL! THAT'S GREENTREE CEMETERY, EH?
AND SO, THE BODY BENEATH THE TOMBSTONE MARKED 'EMMA MORLEY' WAS EXHUMED...
WE'VE UNCOVERED THE COFFIN, CHIEF!
OKAY! DRAG IT UP AND SHIP THE REMAINS TO THE LAB! WE'LL SETTLE THIS ONCE AND FOR ALL!
THE AUTOPSY WAS PERFORMED! TRACES OF ARSENIC WERE FOUND! FELIX MORLEY WAS ARRESTED...
WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS?
IT MEANS WE'RE HOLDING YOU FOR MURDER, MORELY! WE'VE FOUND TRACES OF ARSENIC IN YOUR WIFE'S REMAINS!
ARSENIC! THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! I'M BEING FRAMED! THE POISON I USED LEAVES NO TRACE! IT...UH... I...
DID YOU GET THAT CONFESSION, SERGEANT?
GOT IT, CHIEF!
THE END

DOUBLE-CROSS

Ever since they had pulled that hundred grand job up in Scranton, the Law had been nipping at their heels. They were so busy running for their lives that Morton didn't have a spare second to puzzle over what he was going to do about the loot. But now, at long last, they had outrun the cops . . and Morton realized it was time for a bright boy like himself to start figuring the angles.

It was only a day-or-so after they found the motor court and stopped running that Morton came up with his brain-child . . . the big double-cross which was going to put him on easy street. No reason why *he* shouldn't have ALL the dough, was there? And there was an added gimmick he was able to fit into his scheme: he had pulled the job with Ben Carlisle . . . and Donna, Ben's moll! Morton hated Ben's guts . . . and with the same degree of vehemence he loved the comely Donna. So his scheme came down to this: get Donna to set Ben up for the killing, step in and bump off his partner personally, then amscray with Donna, who had more than once hinted that she was ready to take a runout powder on Ben. Simple? You can say *that* again!

Morton and Donna made their plans carefully, getting together for whispered conversations a dozen times a day. They decided on the third night of their stop-over at the motor court . . . the double-cross they doped out was so neat that it would not only eliminate Ben from the swag and from Morton's romantic yearnings, but it would also take care of the *corpus delicti* until Morton and Donna were far-far away!

The trunk was what made it all possible! Donna had insisted on lugging it around in the back of the car ever since they had first planned to knock over the job up in Scranton. After she had taken care of drugging the unsuspecting Ben, she was to slip his unconscious body into that trunk of hers, and slam the lid. Then, because she was squeamish about putting the slug to her own husband, Morton would wander along and empty his gun into Ben's improvised coffin. Within 5 minutes Morton would be on his way . . . in Ben's car, with Ben's wife at his side, and Ben's share of the dough in his own pocket! A dream of a double-cross!

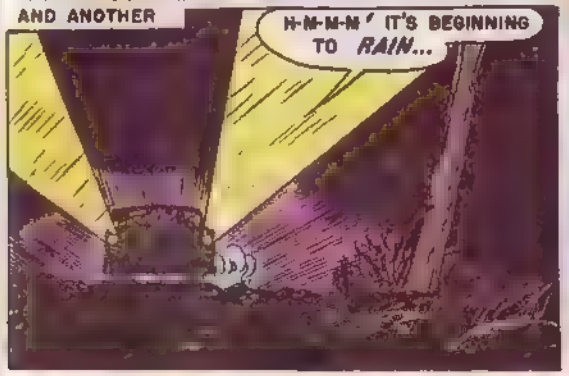
* * * * *

Morton listened outside the cabin door for a few minutes, then turned the knob and let himself in. The trunk was standing there just as Donna had promised . . . the cabin was otherwise empty. Silly the way some of these babes will put the finger on a man, but grow faint at the sight of his blood . . . Morton thought to himself as he slipped his roscoe from its holster. Now there was a visible rattling from inside the trunk, and a stifled moan, and Morton reasoned that Ben had regained consciousness and was struggling to get free. Morton levelled his gun, and with a grim smile, emptied it into the side of the trunk. There was only a single mournful shriek, then nothing but the sound of the bullets tearing through cardboard and thin metal and flesh. Morton turned away, his mind already occupied with plans for the getaway dash with Donna, when he came face-to-face with Ben Carlisle, smiling at him from the cabin door!

"Mighty neat," said Ben, his finger tightening around the trigger of the automatic leveled at Mortons' head. "Even though I knew my wife . . . your lady-love . . . was getting set to pull out on me, I felt kinda funny about bumping her off myself! Sentimental, I s'pose! But when I suddenly tumbled to your plan for *me*, I knew I could rely on my partner to kill whatever was stashed away inside that trunk! That took care of one of you . . . and now for the other . . ."

THE ESCAPED MANIAC!

THE ENGINE HUMMED CONTENTEDLY AS I GUIDED THE CAR ALONG THE HIGHWAY' BEFORE ME, THE HEADLIGHT BEAMS REACHED OUT, SUCKED IN THE ROAD AHEAD, AND SWEPT IT BENEATH THE SPEEDING WHEELS! SUDDENLY A DROP OF WATER SPLASHED AGAINST THE WINDSHIELD AND RAN DOWN IN A CROOKED PATH! THEN ANOTHER... AND ANOTHER

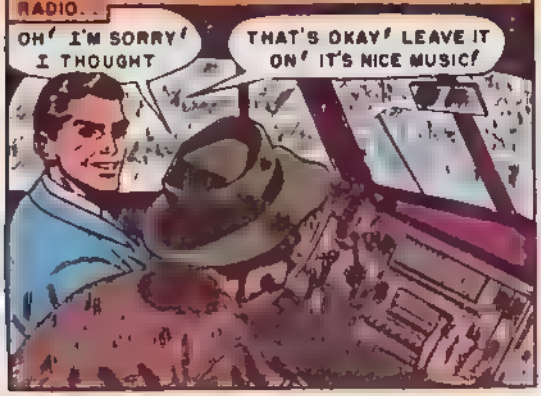


I FLICKED ON THE WINDSHIELD WIPERS AND THEY BEGAN TO BEAT A STEADY RHYTHM AS THEY CUT TWO SEMI-CIROULAR CLEAR SPOTS IN THE RAIN-DRENCHED GLASS! SUDDENLY, THE HEADLIGHTS KNIFING THROUGH THE GLISTENING DOWNPOUR .FELL UPON A FIGURE STANDING IN THE ROAD...WAVING

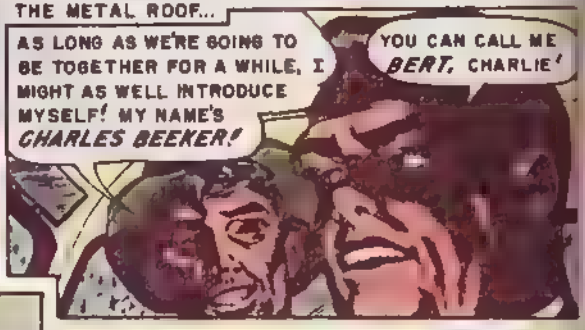
I PULLED UP ALONGSIDE THE STRANGER IN THE ROAD AND OPENED THE CAR DOOR..

I EYED HIM! HE WAS UNSHAVEN. POORLY DRESSED WITH HOLLOW, STARING EYES

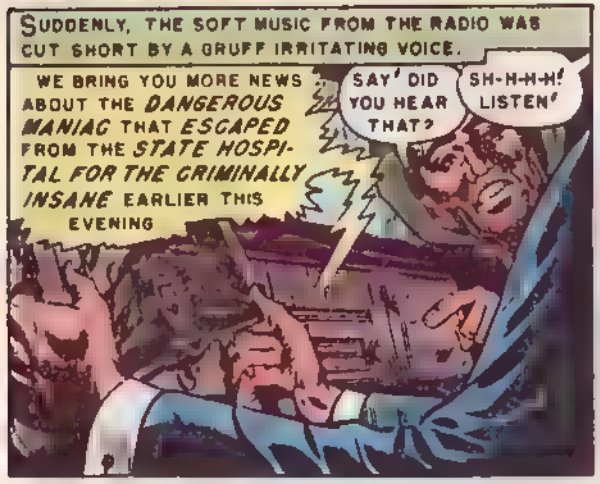
THE STRANGER REACHED DOWN AND TURNED A KNOB ON THE DASHBOARD! SUDDENLY, THE CAR WAS FILLED WITH MUSIC! HE'D TURNED ON THE RADIO..

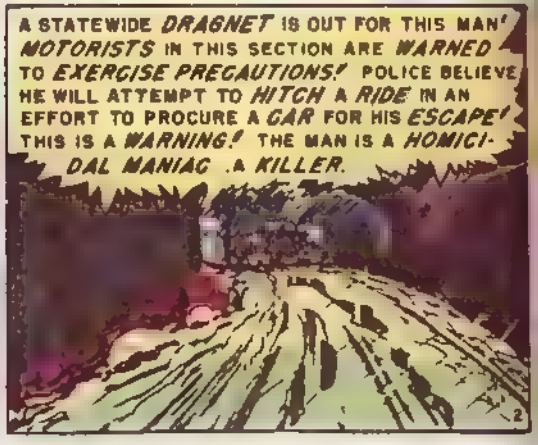


THE RUSH OF WARM AIR FROM THE HEATER FELT GOOD AS THE STRANGER FOUND THE SWITCH AND TURNED IT ON! THE MUSIC FROM THE RADIO WAS SOFT AND SOOTHING! RAIN DROPS CHATTERED HAPPILY ON THE METAL ROOF...


AS LONG AS WE'RE GOING TO BE TOGETHER FOR A WHILE, I MIGHT AS WELL INTRODUCE MYSELF! MY NAME'S CHARLES BEEKER!
YOU CAN CALL ME BERT, CHARLIE!

SUDDENLY, THE SOFT MUSIC FROM THE RADIO WAS CUT SHORT BY A GRUFF IRRITATING VOICE.


WE BRING YOU MORE NEWS ABOUT THE DANGEROUS MANIAC THAT ESCAPED FROM THE STATE HOSPITAL FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE EARLIER THIS EVENING
SAY! DID YOU HEAR THAT?
SH-H-H-H! LISTEN!


A STATEWIDE DRAGNET IS OUT FOR THIS MAN! MOTORISTS IN THIS SECTION ARE WARNED TO EXERCISE PRECAUTIONS! POLICE BELIEVE HE WILL ATTEMPT TO HITCH A RIDE IN AN EFFORT TO PROCURE A CAR FOR HIS ESCAPE! THIS IS A WARNING! THE MAN IS A HOMICIDAL MANIAC .A KILLER.

I LOOKED AT CHARLIE, MY NEW-FOUND CAR COMPANION! HE WAS STARING AT THE TINY HOLES IN THE DASHBOARD AS IF HE COULD SEE THE ANNOUNCER WHOSE VOICE WE WERE HEARING! SUDDENLY THE FULL MEANING OF WHAT THE RADIO VOICE WAS SAYING HIT ME...

. IF YOU ARE DRIVING . . DO NOT PICK UP STRANGERS! I REPEAT! IF YOU ARE DRIVING *CLICK!*

CHARLIE! YOU . YOU TURNED IT OFF!

AH! WHO WANTS TO LISTEN TO THAT JUNK! OKAY! SO WE *WON'T* PICK UP STRANGERS!

I STUDIED HIM! HIS HOLLOW STARING EYES MET MINE! SUDDENLY A LOOK OF UNDERSTANDING CROSSED HIS SEEDY FACE .

HOLY CRIPES! YOU. . YOU THINK *I...ME?* TAKE IT *EASY*, BERT! DON'T *WORRY!* I'M JUST A

I... I *DID* PICK YOU *UP*... BACK THERE.

CHARLIE REACHED INTO HIS POCKET! I SLIPPED MY HAND INTO *MY* POCKET.. SEARCHING FRANTICALLY FOR SOMETHING TO PROTECT MYSELF WITH! MY HAND CLOSED ABOUT MY SWITCH-KNIFE! I PRESSED THE BUTTON AND THE BLADE SNAPPED OPEN! CHARLIE DREW A WALLET FROM HIS COAT...

LOOK, BERT! HERE'S MY *IDENTIFICATION!* I'M A FACTORY WORKER! GOT A *JOB* WAITIN' FOR ME IN DENVER!

I..I SEE!

I RELEASED MY HOLD ON THE OPEN KNIFE IN MY POCKET WITH RELIEF AND SMILED...

YOU CAN'T *BLAME* ME FOR BEING *NERVOUS*, CHARLIE! AFTER ALL ..

I UNDERSTAND, BERT! YOU NEEDN'T HAVE ANY FEARS! I . I DON'T *LOOK* LIKE A *HOMICIDAL MANIAC*, DO I?

I SHOOK MY HEAD! CHARLIE TURNED ON THE RADIO AGAIN...

LET'S SEE IF THEY GOT ANYTHING NEW ON THIS... *NUT!*

GOOD IDEA!

THE MUSIC SWELLED UP! MEANWHILE THE RAIN WAS GETTING HEAVIER! I COULD HARDLY SEE THE ROAD AHEAD.

WE'LL JUST KEEP TUNED! SAY! IT'S GETTIN' *BAD* OUT THERE!

YEAH! I'D HATE TO BE *OUT* IN IT!

THE IRRITATING VOICE CAME ON AGAIN, INTERRUPTING THE MELODIC STRAINS...

ANOTHER VICTIM OF THE ESCAPED MANIAC HAS BEEN FOUND LYING BESIDE THE *STATE HIGHWAY!* THE *CLOTHES* AND *IDENTIFICATION* HAD BEEN *REMOVED* FROM THE BODY THE KILLER'S HOSPITAL GARB WAS FOUND NEARBY! HE WAS OBVIOUSLY...

I LOOKED AT CHARLIE! HE WAS SMILING AT ME SHEEPISHLY! I THOUGHT ABOUT THE WALLET HE HAD JUST SHOWN ME...

THEY'RE MAKING IT *TOUGH* ON ME, EH, BERT? YOU *STILL* LOOK SUSPICIOUS!

IT ISN'T THAT, CHARLIE! I DON'T *MEAN* TO...

THE ANNOUNCER CONTINUED.

THE ESCAPED MAN IS RATIONAL AT TIMES! HE DOESN'T *APPEAR* TO BE DANGEROUS! IT IS ONLY ON MOMENTS OF SEVERE ANXIETY THAT HE WILL BECOME VIOLENT! CITIZENS ARE WARNED...

I REACHED INTO MY POCKET AGAIN AND FINGERED MY OPEN SWITCH-KNIFE! CHARLIE SHOOK HIS HEAD AS HE STARED AT THE RADIO LOUD-SPEAKER GRILL! SUDDENLY THE CAR CAREENED INTO A DEEP PUDDLE! THE ENGINE COUGHED AND DIED..

SHE, SHE *STALLED!*

OH, BROTHER! WHAT A DESOLATE SPOT..

I TRIED TO START THE CAR AGAIN, BUT IT WAS NO USE! THE WIRES WERE PROBABLY WET! CHARLIE SQUINTED THROUGH THE RAIN-SWEPT WINDSHIELD INTO THE DARKNESS..

HEY! LOOKS LIKE A *FARMHOUSE* UP THERE! MAYBE THEY HAVE A *PHONE!*

IT'S ALL DARK! NO LIGHTS ON! IT LOOKS *DESERTED!*

CHARLIE SWUNG OPEN THE CAR DOOR AND BUTTONED HIS COAT UP TIGHTLY ABOUT HIS NECK...

C'MON! LET'S GO AHEAD! I'LL TAKE A *LOOK!* BE RIGHT BEHIND YOU!

CHARLIE STARTED TOWARD THE DARK FARMHOUSE THROUGH THE SWEEPING RAIN! FOR A MOMENT I HESITATED..TEMPTED TO RUN THE OTHER WAY! THEN I FOLLOWED HIM! WE SPLASHED THROUGH THE MUD UP TO THE BATTERED PORCH...

LOOKS LIKE YOU WERE *WRONG*, BERT! SOMEBODY *DOES* LIVE HERE!

THEY MUST BE *ASLEEP!* I'LL *KNOCK!*

I BEAT MY FIST AGAINST THE DOOR AND WAITED! THERE WAS NO RESPONSE! I TRIED THE DOOR! IT CREAKED OPEN.

IT'S UNLOCKED! NOBODY'S HOME!

THEY MUST HAVE GONE INTO TOWN! THE RAIN PROBABLY DELAYED THEM.

I FOLLOWED CHARLIE INTO THE FARM HOUSE! IT WAS WARM AND COMFORTABLE! CHARLIE SPOTTED A RADIO...
LOOK! A RADIO! LET'S SEE WHAT'S NEW ON THAT ESCAPED KILLER!
THE MUSIC CAME UP AND FILLED THE FARMHOUSE! I WATCHED CHARLIE CAREFULLY! HE SEEMED NERVOUS... FIDGETY! SOON, THE SQUAWKING VOICE OF THE ANNOUNCER CAME ON AGAIN...
THERE HAS BEEN NO REPORT ON THE ESCAPED MANIAC FOR SEVERAL HOURS NOW! POLICE STILL BELIEVE HE IS IN THIS GENERAL VICINITY!
AND NOW FOR A DESCRIPTION OF THE DANGEROUS KILLER! HE IS...
CHARLIE SHUT THE RADIO OFF! HE TURNED TO ME APOLOGETICALLY...
AW, WHAT'S THE USE OF HEARING HIS DESCRIPTION! THOSE THINGS ARE ALWAYS SO GENERAL, ANYWAY! I'LL THINK IT FITS YOU, AND YOU'LL THINK IT FITS ME!
Y...YEAH, CHARLIE!
CHARLIE LOOKED AROUND! HE GRINNED AT ME...
LOOKS LIKE THERE'S NO PHONE! THAT'S TOO BAD!
YES! T-TOO BAD!
I FINGERED MY OPEN SWITCH-KNIFE IN MY POCKET! CHARLIE STARED AT ME...
WHAT ARE YOU SO NERVOUS ABOUT, BERT? YOU'RE PALE AS A GHOST!
AM I ?
CHARLIE MOVED TOWARD ME.. HIS HOLLOW EYES WIDE...
YOU STILL THINK I'M THE MANIAC, DON'T YOU, BERT? YOU'RE AFRAID OF ME, AREN'T YOU?
KEEP AWAY, CHARLIE! KEEP AWAY FROM ME!
CHARLIE REACHED OUT AT ME! I DREW THE OPEN SWITCH KNIFE FROM MY POCKET...
YOU THINK I MIGHT... HUH? WHAT'S THAT YOU GOT THERE?
IT'S A KNIFE, CHARLIE! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO KILL ME...
5

CHARLIE BACKED AWAY FROM ME... FRIGHTENED...

NO, CHARLIE! YOU WON'T GET THE *CHANCE* TO *KILL* ME!

W-WAIT A MINUTE, BERT! I...I WAS ONLY *JOKING*...

I BROUGHT THE KNIFE DOWN WITH ALL MY MIGHT! CHARLIE GASPED! A FUNNY LITTLE CHOKING SOUND CAME FROM HIS THROAT...

WELL, *I'M NOT JOKING*...

I STARED DOWN AT CHARLIE! HE WAS DEAD! HIS HOLLOW EYES WERE CLOSED AT LAST! HOW I HATED THEM! SUDDENLY A CAR DREW UP OUTSIDE...

SOMEONE'S ...OUT THERE..

TWO COPS EXPLODED THROUGH THE DOORWAY! THEY LOOKED AT CHARLIE...LYING IN A POOL OF BLOOD ON THE FLOOR! A WHITE-COATED FIGURE CAME UP BEHIND THEM...

THAT'S HIM!

WHO? THIS GUY ON THE FLOOR?

THE WHITE-COATED FIGURE SHOOK HIS HEAD...POINTING AT ME...

NO! HIM! THAT'S HIM! BE CAREFUL! HE'S GOT A *KNIFE*...

NO! YOU *CAN'T* TAKE ME BACK! *I WON'T GO*...

I STRUCK OUT SAVAGELY AS THEY CAME AT ME! SUDDENLY, EVERYTHING WENT BLACK! WHEN I CAME TO, I WAS LYING ON THE FLOOR OF A POLICE CAR, BOUND IN A STRAIT JACKET...

...HE MUST HAVE HITCHED A RIDE.. KILLED THE CAR OWNER...UNDRESSED... SWITCHED CLOTHES... DUMPED THE BODY...AND CONTINUED ON IN THE CAR...

AND LATER PICKED UP THAT POOR GUY HE KNIFED BACK THERE IN THE FARMHOUSE!

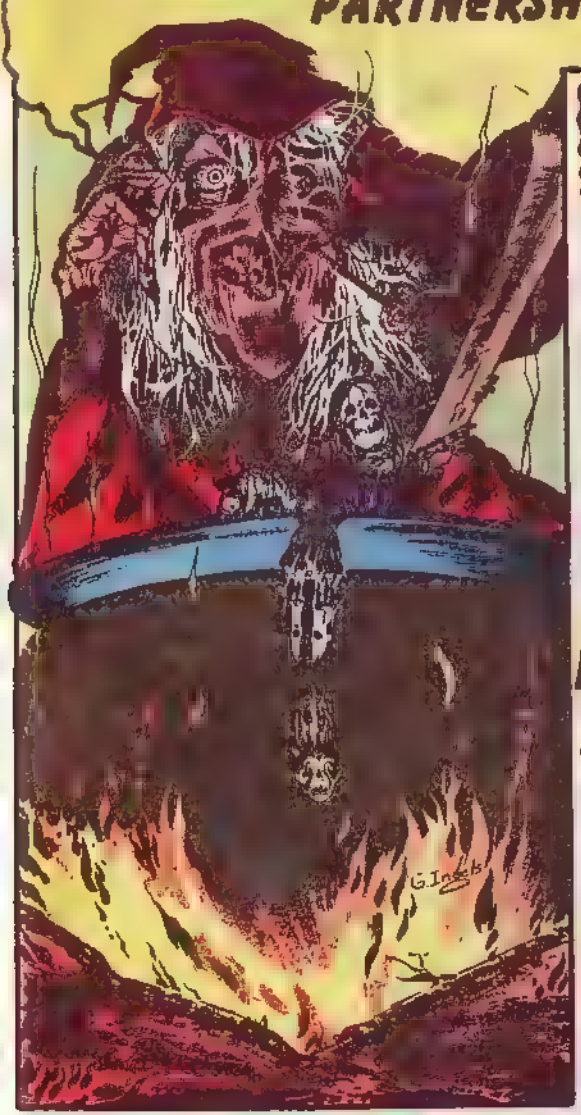
SO, NOW I'M BACK IN THE STATE HOSPITAL! I'M WRITING THIS WITH A TINY PIECE OF LEAD FROM A PENCIL! THEY LET ME HAVE AN INCH AT A TIME! THEY'RE *AFRAID* TO GIVE ME A *WHOLE* PENCIL! I REALLY CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT! I DON'T *MEAN* TO HURT ANYONE! ITS ONLY WHEN THEY *THREATEN* ME! THEN I MUST *PROTECT* MYSELF! *WHY* DO YOU LOOK AT ME LIKE *THAT*? YOU *HATE* ME, DON'T YOU? *YOU* WANT TO KILL ME, *TOO!* YES...IT'S PEOPLE LIKE *YOU* I MUST *PROTECT MYSELF* FROM!

THE END

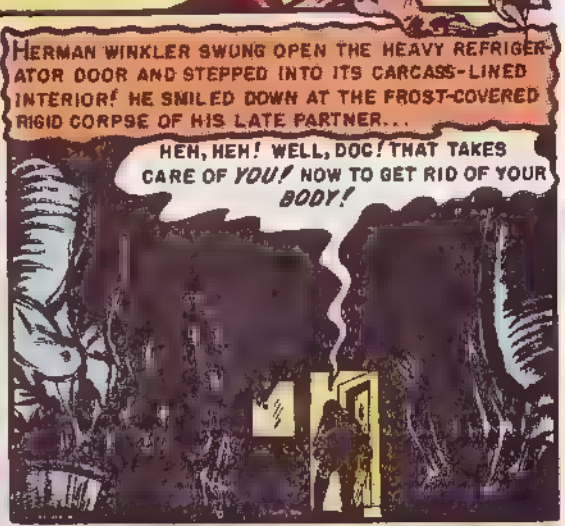
THE HAUNT OF FEAR

HEE, HEE! YES, IT'S *ME* AGAIN! *THE OLD WITCH*, MISTRESS OF *THE HAUNT OF FEAR!* READY TO LIGHT THE FIRE UNDER MY *CAULDRON* AND DISH OUT ANOTHER OF MY *MAD MORSELS OF HORROR!* READY FOR *YOUR* SERVING? THEN I'LL BEGIN THE *TASTY TALE* OF *TERROR* I CALL.

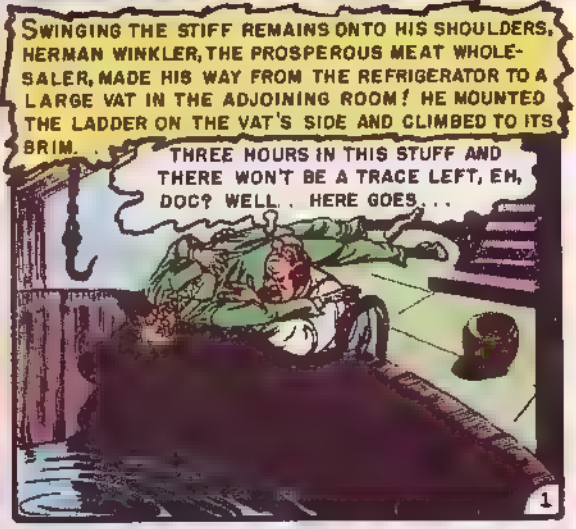
PARTNERSHIP DISSOLVED!



HERMAN WINKLER SWUNG OPEN THE HEAVY REFRIGERATOR DOOR AND STEPPED INTO ITS CARCASS-LINED INTERIOR! HE SMILED DOWN AT THE FROST-COVERED RIGID CORPSE OF HIS LATE PARTNER...



SWINGING THE STIFF REMAINS ONTO HIS SHOULDERS, HERMAN WINKLER, THE PROSPEROUS MEAT WHOLESALER, MADE HIS WAY FROM THE REFRIGERATOR TO A LARGE VAT IN THE ADJOINING ROOM! HE MOUNTED THE LADDER ON THE VAT'S SIDE AND CLIMBED TO ITS BRIM.



HERMAN SLID THE RIGID BODY FROM HIS SHOULDERS AND LET IT FALL INTO THE CLEAR LIQUID THAT FILLED THE VAT! THE SPLASH ECHOED THROUGH THE DESERTED PLANT...
HEH, HEH! AND NOW OUR SECRET IS ALL MINE...DOC! ALL MINE!
AS THE BODY SUNK TO THE BOTTOM OF THE VAT, HERMAN STUDIED IT! HE BEGAN TO THINK BACK...BACK TO THE FIRST TIME HE'D MET 'DOC'...
THERE'S A GENTLEMAN OUTSIDE TO SEE YOU, MR. TWINKLER!
TELL HIM TO GO AWAY, MISS STONE! I'M NOT SEEING ANY...
BUSINESS HAD BEEN BAD BACK THEN! HERMAN HAD BEEN ALMOST READY TO THROW IN THE TOWEL! THE BIG PACKING HOUSE DISTRIBUTORS HAD PRACTICALLY TAKEN OVER ALL OF HIS WHOLESALE ACCOUNTS
PLEASE, MR. WINKLER! GIVE ME FIVE MINUTES OF YOUR TIME! THAT'S ALL I ASK!
IF YOU'RE SELLING SOMETHING, I DON'T WANT IT! I...
THAT WAS 'DOC'! HE'D HUSTLED INTO HERMAN'S OFFICE WITH AN ELECTRIC APPLIANCE OF SOME KIND UNDER HIS ARM AND A SMALL BOTTLE IN HIS HAND...
ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF! I AM DOCTOR PAUL MERRICK! I HAVE HERE IN THIS BOTTLE A SOLUTION THAT IS GOING TO MAKE US BOTH VERY RICH!
THAT SO? AND HOW IS IT GOING TO DO THAT?
DOCTOR MERRICK HAD PLUGGED THE SHINY ELECTRIC APPLIANCE INTO THE WALL... THEN HAD MADE A STRANGE REQUEST...
MR WINKLER! I'D LIKE YOU TO SEND DOWN TO YOUR REFRIGERATOR AND BRING ME THE TOUGHEST, CHEAPEST CUT OF MEAT YOU HAVE!
OKAY, DOC! I CAN GO ALONG WITH A GAG!
HERMAN HAD CALLED DOWN, AND THE MEAT HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP! IT HAD BEEN A CUT OF MEAT THAT WAS ESPECIALLY UNSALEABLE BECAUSE OF ITS TOUGHNESS! DOCTOR MERRICK HAD TAKEN IT AND DOUSED IT WITH HIS SOLUTION...
WHAT'S SOAKING THE MEAT WITH THAT SOLUTION GOT TO DO WITH IT, DOC?
YOU WILL SEE, MR. WINKLER! AND NOW, I AM GOING TO BROIL IT...
THE ELECTRIC APPLIANCE THE 'DOC' HAD BROUGHT WAS ONE OF THOSE NEW INFRA-RED BROILERS! HE'D PUT THE MEAT INTO IT AND TURNED IT ON! SOON, THE AROMA OF BROILED STEAK FILLED HERMAN'S OFFICE! WHEN IT WAS FINISHED, DOCTOR MERRICK REMOVED IT FROM THE BROILER...
AND NOW, MR. WINKLER! JUST TASTE IT!
LISTEN, DOC! I WOULDN'T EAT THAT SHOE LEATHER ON A BET! THAT CUT IS THE TOUGHEST...
2

BUT THE 'DOC' HAD BEEN INSISTANT, AND SO HERMAN HAD CUT A PIECE OF THE BROILED MEAT AND TASTED IT. . .
GOOD LORD! FILLET MIGNON! IT'S DELICIOUS! SO TENDER. .
YOU SEE? DO YOU AGREE NOW THAT MY SECRET CHEMICAL SOLUTION CAN MAKE US RICH?
YOU SAID IT! JUST WHAT IS THAT STUFF, ANYWAY?
WELL, MR. WINKLER! IT IS AN EXTRACT OF PAPAYA FRUIT! AN ENZYME CALLED PAPIEN! WHEN MIXED WITH A SECRET CATALYTIC AGENT, THE SOLUTION ACTS LIKE PEPSIN, A DIGESTIVE ENZYME FOUND IN THE HUMAN BODY. IT TENDERIZES THE TOUGHEST MEAT BY A PROCESS SIMILAR TO... SAY... PARTIAL DIGESTION!
MY PLAN IS A SIMPLE ONE! BY DIPPING CHEAP CUTS OF MEAT IN THIS SOLUTION, WE CAN SELL IT AS HIGH-GRADE STEAK FOR A NOMINAL PRICE! YOUR COMPETITORS... THE BIG PACKING HOUSE DISTRIBUTORS... CAN BE UNDERSOLD!
WE'D MAKE A FORTUNE! WHAT'S YOUR PRICE, DOC?
HALF THE PROFITS, MR. WINKLER!
DOC! IT'S A DEAL! WHEN DO WE START?
AND SO, HERMAN HAD ORDERED A HUGE VAT BUILT IN AN ADJOINING ROOM TO THE HUGE REFRIGERATOR...
WELL, DOC! HOW'S IT LOOK TO YOU?
PERFECT! I'LL GET TO WORK ON THE PAPAYA SOLUTION!
THEN, THEY'D BEGUN BUYING CHEAP CUTS OF BEEF! WHEN THE MEAT WOULD ARRIVE, IT WOULD BE DIPPED INTO THE VAT FOR THE SHORT TIME NECESSARY, AND THEN WOULD BE MOVED TO THE REFRIGERATOR.
ALL RIGHT! TIME'S UP! HOIST IT OUT AND BRING IN THE NEXT LOAD!
WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU LEFT THE MEAT IN THE PAPAYA SOLUTION TOO LONG, DOC?
WHY, EVENTUALLY THE MEAT WOULD BE COMPLETELY DISSOLVED, HERMAN! IT WOULD BE AS IF IT WERE... WELL... DIGESTED... BY THE ENZYME!
OH! I SEE!
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HERMAN STARED DOWN AT DOC'S BODY LYING UNDER THE CLEAR LIQUID AT THE BOTTOM OF THE VAT! IT WAS BEGINNING TO LOSE ITS SHAPE...

IT WAS GOOD OF YOU TO TELL ME HOW TO GET RID OF YOUR BODY THAT WAY, DOC! I *APPRECIATE* IT!

HERMAN REMEMBERED THE FIRST TIME HE'D THOUGHT OF GETTING RID OF 'DOC'! HE'D BEEN SITTING IN HIS OFFICE COUNTING THE FLOCK OF MEAT ORDERS THAT HAD BEGUN TO POUR IN, WHEN...

HERMAN! I HAVE THE MOST *WONDERFUL* NEWS! I JUST... Y!!!!!

WATCH OUT!

DOCTOR MERRICK HAD BURST IN THE DOOR AND HAD SKIDDED ON THE SCATTER RUG ON THE FLOOR! HE SAT THERE... WHERE HE HAD FALLEN...

BLASTED RUG! IT'S A *HAZARD!* A MAN COULD BE *KILLED* THAT WAY! YOU OUGHT TO GET *RID* OF IT!

HAW, HAW! YOU LOOK *CUTE*, DOC

DOC HAD GOTTEN TO HIS FEET! THEN HE'D ANNOUNCED

HERMAN! I'VE JUST MADE A WONDERFUL FIND! I'VE DISCOVERED HOW TO CONCENTRATE THE PAPAYA ENZYME SOLUTION SO THAT ONLY A FEW DROPS WILL MAKE A VATFUL!

THAT'S *GREAT*, DOC! NOW YOU WON'T HAVE TO BEAT YOUR BRAINS OUT MAKING IT ALL THE TIME!

MAKING ENOUGH SOLUTION HAD BEEN THE ONE THING THAT HAD LIMITED THE AMOUNT OF MEAT ORDERS THEY COULD FILL! AND DOCTOR MERRICK HAD INSISTED ON KEEPING HIS FORMULA A SECRET! AS HE HAD TOLD HERMAN ONE DAY...

AFTER ALL, HERMAN! IF I *TOLD* YOU THE *SECRET CATALYST* I USE, YOU COULD MAKE IT *YOURSELF*, AND YOU WOULDN'T *NEED* ME! THAT'S MY ONE *HOLD* ON OUR *DEAL!*

DON'T BE *SILLY*, DOC! YOU'LL ALWAYS GET YOUR SHARE! BUT WE COULD HANDLE SO MANY MORE ORDERS IF YOU COULD MAKE *MORE!*

BUT DOC HAD BEEN FIRM! HE'D JEALOUSLY GUARDED HIS SECRET! HE'D WORKED LONG AND HARD MIXING VATFULS OF THE SOLUTION! BUT THEN, WHEN HE'D DISCOVERED HOW TO CONCENTRATE IT...

I COULD MAKE ENOUGH TO LAST US *THREE MONTHS!* A QUART OF THE CONCENTRATE, USING *FIVE DROPS PER VAT*, WOULD *DO* IT!

DOC! YOU'VE BEEN WORKING *HARD!* SO HAVE *I!* WE NEED A *REST!*

WHY DON'T YOU MAKE UP A QUART OF THE CONCENTRATE AND GO AWAY FOR A *VACATION!* YOUR *SHARE* OF THE PROFITS IS QUITE A *ROLL!* YOU COULD HAVE SOME *FUN!*

AND WHEN I GOT BACK, *YOU'D* BE ABLE TO GO! THAT'S A WONDERFUL IDEA, HERMAN!

MEANWHILE, OF COURSE, THE FAME OF WINKLER-MERRICK MEAT HAD SPREAD! SUCH HIGH-GRADE TENDER TASTY MEAT AT SO LOW A PRICE HAD PLACED IT IN GREAT DEMAND! RETAILERS THROUGHOUT THE CITY FLOODED THEIR OFFICES WITH ORDERS...
LOOK AT THESE! ORDERS...ORDERS...AND MORE ORDERS! THERE'S A FORTUNE IN THE DOC'S ENZYME SOLUTION! IF IT WERE ALL MINE...AND I DIDN'T HAVE TO SHARE THE PROFITS...
AND SO, WHEN THE NEWSPAPERS ANNOUNCED DOCTOR MERRICK'S FORTHCOMING VACATION, HERMAN HAD MADE UP HIS MIND...
HERE'S THE CONCENTRATED PAPAYA SOLUTION, HERMAN! YOU'D BETTER KEEP IT SOMEPLACE SAFE!
I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU'D STAY TONIGHT, DOC, AND GIVE ME THE LOW-DOWN ON HOW TO USE THE STUFF!
ALL RIGHT, HERMAN! I'LL BE BACK AFTER HOURS! HMMM! I SEE YOU STILL HAVE THAT SCATTER RUG ON THE FLOOR! YOU OUGHT TO TAKE IT UP! SOMEONE'LL GET HURT!
HAW, HAW! I'M LEAVING IT DOWN, DOC! I'M HOPIN' YOU SKID ON IT LIKE YOU DID BEFORE! LORD, YOU LOOKED FUNNY!
THEN DOC HAD LEFT TO MAKE LAST MINUTE ARRANGEMENTS FOR HIS VACATION WHICH WAS STARTING THE NEXT MORNING! THAT NIGHT, AFTER THE PLANT HAD CLOSED, HE RETURNED...
IT'S QUITE SIMPLE, HERMAN! ADD FIVE DROPS OF THE CONCENTRATED SOLUTION TO A VAT OF CLEAR WATER! IT IS GOOD FOR ABOUT THREE THOUSAND POUNDS OF MEAT! THEN A NEW VAT-FUL MUST BE MIXED!
YES, HERMAN HAD MADE UP HIS MIND! HE'D DECIDED TO KILL DOC! IT WAS A SIMPLE PLAN! AS THEY'D STOOD THERE IN THE DESERTED PLANT...
...AND EVERY NIGHT YOU MUST DRAIN THE SOLUTION FROM THE VAT! THE CATALYST DOESN'T LAST OVER NIGHT! IT LOSES ITS EFFECT WHEN EXPOSED TO AIR TOO LONG!
I SEE! OH, BY THE WAY...
HERMAN HAD LED DOCTOR MERRICK TO THE REFRIGERATOR...
THERE'S A PIECE OF MEAT IN HERE I WANT YOU TO SEE! IT WAS RETURNED...
OH? WHERE...?
...AND AS THE DOC HAD STEPPED IN THROUGH THE DOORWAY, HERMAN HAD SLAMMED IT SHUT...
HERMAN! WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? OPEN THE DOOR! I'LL FREEZE!
THAT'S EXACTLY THE IDEA, DOC!
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THEN HERMAN HAD BOLTED THE REFRIGERATOR DOOR AND HAD WAITED UNTIL THE POOR DOCTOR HAD FROZEN TO DEATH! NOW, HE STARED DOWN INTO THE VAT AS THE LAST TRACES OF THE DOC'S FROZEN BODY DISSOLVED IN THE PAPAYA ENZYME SOLUTION...
HEH, HEH! THEY'LL THINK YOU LEFT ON YOUR VACATION... AND JUST... DISAPPEARED!
HERMAN OPENED THE DRAIN VALVE OF THE VAT AND THE SOLUTION RAN OUT! THEN HE RETURNED TO HIS OFFICE...
NOW, I'LL TAKE A SAMPLE OF THIS CONCENTRATED PAPAYA ENZYME TO A CHEMIST AND HAVE IT ANALYZED... AND THE FORMULA WILL BE ALL MINE!
HERMAN PUT THE DECANTER OF THE REMAINING SOLUTION INTO HIS SAFE! THEN HE TOOK THE BOTTLED SAMPLE AND LEFT! LATER, AT A CHEMIST'S LABORATORY...
YES! I'D LIKE THE CONTENTS ANALYZED! HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?
WE'LL HAVE THE REPORT TOMORROW NIGHT!
THE NEXT DAY, IN HIS OFFICE...
MORNIN', MR. WINKLER! THE VAT'S FILLED! WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU TO GIVE US THE 'GO AHEAD' ON THE DIPPING!
OH! I'LL BE RIGHT WITH YOU, JOHN!
HERMAN OPENED THE SAFE, TOOK OUT THE DECANTER OF CONCENTRATED SOLUTION, AND MEASURED OUT...
FIVE DROPS! HMMM! THIS MUST BE A POWERFUL SOLUTION!
THEN HE GAVE THE GLASS WITH THE TINY PORTION OF THE CONCENTRATED DIGESTIVE ENZYME TO THE WAITING EMPLOYEE...
HERE! FIRST, EMPTY THIS INTO THE VAT! COME UP FOR MORE AFTER YOU'VE DIPPED THREE THOUSAND POUNDS OF MEAT!
YES, SIR!
HERMAN PUT THE DECANTER BACK INTO THE SAFE! LATER THAT DAY HE RECEIVED A CALL FROM THE CHEMIST...
WHAT? THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
I'M SORRY, SIR! WE'VE ANALYZED THE SOLUTION AS PAPAYA ENZYME... BUT THE CATALYST USED IN IT IS UNKNOWN TO US! WE CAN'T TELL YOU WHAT IT IS!
6

HERMAN EXPLODED! DOC WAS DEAD! IF THEY COULDN'T IDENTIFY THE CATALYTIC AGENT IN THE SECRET SOLUTION, ALL WAS LOST! THEN...

MR. WINKLER! ONE OF THE MEN IS OUTSIDE! HE SAYS THEY'VE DIPPED THREE THOUSAND POUNDS!

WHA...? OH! ALL RIGHT! I'LL BE RIGHT OUT!

HERMAN OPENED THE SAFE AND TOOK OUT THE DECANTER! HE PLACED IT ON HIS DESK...

THIS...THIS MIGHT BE ALL THAT'S *LEFT* OF DOC MERRICK'S SECRET FORMULA! THREE MONTHS SUPPLY!

THEN HERMAN MEASURED OUT THE FIVE DROPS! AS HE CROSSED HIS OFFICE...

YAAAAAAAAAA!

THE SCATTER RUG SKIDDED ACROSS THE ROOM! HERMAN'S FEET SHOT OUT FROM UNDER HIM! EVERYTHING WENT BLACK! WHEN HE CAME TO, HIS SECRETARY, MISS STONE, WAS BENDING OVER HIM...

WHA... HAPPENED...

THERE! THERE! YOU *FELL* AND HIT YOUR *HEAD*, MR. WINKLER! HERE! DRINK THIS *WATER*!

DIZZILY, HERMAN DRAINED THE GLASS! IT TASTED STRANGE! SUDDENLY HIS HEAD CLEARED! HE FELT A BURNING PAIN IN THE PIT OF HIS STOMACH! HE LOOKED AROUND! THE DECANTER WAS HALF EMPTY...

OH, MY GOD! DID YOU... GIVE ME...THE STUFF... FROM *THAT*?

WHY, YES, SIR! IT'S *WATER*...ISN'T IT? I... I...*MR. WINKLER!*

MISS STONE WATCHED HORRIFIED AS HERMAN BEGAN TO SCREAM! THE CONCENTRATED DIGESTIVE ENZYME WAS WORKING FAST! MR. WINKLER BEGAN TO WRITHE ABOUT THE FLOOR! SOON HIS BODY BEGAN TO SHRIVEL...TURNING BLUE! HIS SCREAMS DIED IN A CHOKING GURGLE! THE FORM OF HIS BLACKENING BODY DISSOLVED INTO A DARK PUTRID MASS! A FOUL, RANCID ODOR WAFTED UPWARD FROM THE QUIVERING, SEETHING POOL! MISS STONE TURNED AWAY AND SCREAMED...

EEEEEEEEEEE!

HEE, HEE! AND SO, HERMAN ENDED UP *SCATTERED* ALL OVER THE *SCATTER RUG*...COMPLETELY *DIGESTED* FROM THE *INSIDE OUT*... WHICH MUST BE QUITE A SENSATION, EH, KIDDIES? ANYTIME *YOU'D* LIKE TO KNOW HOW IT *FEELS*, I HAVE WHAT'S LEFT OF THE *DECANTER OF CONCENTRATED PAPAYA ENZYME* HERE IN THE *HAUNT OF FEAR*! JUST COME OVER AND HELP YOURSELF TO A SNORT! IT OUGHT TO HAVE QUITE A *KICK*! AND YOU'LL GET A *KICK* OUT OF ALL THE *OTHER E-C MAGAZINES*, TOO! LOOK FOR THEM!

The Old Witch